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JOHN AND MARTHA DANIELS

















# GUN-DOGS

TO THE MEMORY OF

“JOHNNY”

A LABRADOR AND A GREAT GAME-FINDER.

HIMSELF GATHERED, MAY 1931.

# GUN - DOGS

*by*

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*"The Frequent Gun," "A Dozen Dogs or So," "A Peck o' Maut,"*

*"A Fisherman's Angles," etc., etc.*

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

*by*

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*Published in London by*

EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE (PUBLISHERS) LIMITED

*and in New York by*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

MCMXXXI

*A cow for my dairy, a dog for my game,  
And a purse when a friend wants to borrow;  
I'll envy no Nabob his riches or fame  
Or what honours may wait him to-morrow.*

JOHN COLLINS (1742-1808).



# CONTENTS

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| THE LABRADOR RETRIEVER . . . . .                | 1    |
| THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER . . . . .                  | 9    |
| THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER. . . . .             | 17   |
| THE WAVY- (OR FLAT-) COATED RETRIEVER . . . . . | 27   |
| THE CLUMBER SPANIEL . . . . .                   | 35   |
| THE IRISH WATER SPANIEL . . . . .               | 43   |
| THE COCKER SPANIEL . . . . .                    | 51   |
| THE SPRINGER SPANIEL . . . . .                  | 59   |
| THE ENGLISH SETTER . . . . .                    | 67   |
| THE IRISH SETTER . . . . .                      | 75   |
| THE GORDON SETTER . . . . .                     | 83   |
| THE POINTER . . . . .                           | 91   |



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

|   | FACING PAGE |
|---|-------------|
| THE LABRADOR RETRIEVER . . . . .                | 3           |
| THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER . . . . .                  | 11          |
| THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER . . . . .            | 19          |
| THE WAVY- (OR FLAT-) COATED RETRIEVER . . . . . | 29          |
| THE CLUMBER SPANIEL . . . . .                   | 37          |
| THE IRISH WATER SPANIEL . . . . .               | 45          |
| THE COCKER SPANIEL . . . . .                    | 53          |
| THE SPRINGER SPANIEL . . . . .                  | 61          |
| THE ENGLISH SETTER . . . . .                    | 69          |
| THE IRISH SETTER . . . . .                      | 77          |
| THE GORDON SETTER . . . . .                     | 85          |
| THE POINTER . . . . .                           | 93          |





## PREFACE

“**W**HAT fun,” a youthful Guardsman is reported to have exclaimed, as he ‘larked’ home to Melton after a blank day, “what fun fox-hunting would be *if it wasn’t for those damned hounds!*”

Plagiarising this Nimroditty, most of us, who are not super-shots, will say, “What *poor* fun would shooting be without shooting-dogs!” And surely the super-shot, who sees most of the game, is handicapped in that he can rarely enjoy the treat of seeing dog-work? Our professor has no time in all his shooting days for aught other than the justifying of his invitation, and must therefore, poor fellow! find his satisfaction in totals and averages, the while, one drive done, he and his batteries step mechanically along to the next position. How he must envy us, his weaker brethren, our opportunities to enjoy ourselves and handle our dogs!

For what makes more for the enjoyment of a day’s shooting than the gun-dog? Indeed, to judge by the infinity of books about shooting-dogs, you’d say that the gun existed mainly for the dog. And has this pincushion of pens left for me, who would make yet another gun-dog book, anything that is new or original to write about gun-dogs? I think not.

So to make my book I must needs go back and, picking and stealing, begin at the beginning again, copy from old pages, remember from old conversations, how gun-dogs began to be gun-dogs, and how they came to be, to me and to many, more than half the joy of the

## P R E F A C E

moor and the manor. It has been fun thus to go back, thus to remember, and thus to make my eleven rhymes and one, which Mr. Punch and Mr. Eric Parker, respectively, permit me to include with these old conceits.

And now that my fun is finished, I'll make bold to hope that a possible reader may find some fun here, too, and that, while accepting my facts, he will say tolerantly of my fancies, "Why, of course, it *may* have been so."

P. R. C.

*September 1931.*

# THE LABRADOR RETRIEVER









## THE LABRADOR RETRIEVER

THE title "retriever" originally meant any sort of dog that brought dead or wounded game to its master after he had shot the same. "Retriever" described, in fact, the work done rather than the dog that did it. Notable sportsmen had, and not so very long ago either, their own individual kennels of dogs, dogs of all appearances, all of which were called "retrievers." A beagle crossed with a pointer, with a terrier even, was a retriever, and sometimes a very good one, in the eighteen-fifties. And a "hard" mouth was in those days no disadvantage in a gun-dog; do we not read of retrievers recommended in that they "bit and killed" the game they gathered? Sometimes I remember this long-ago merit when my own dog comes back to me with a wailing, wounded hare which I must personally put out of her pain.

The late Mr. Innes, Sheriff erst of Moray, in his delightful memoir of Charles St. John, describes a "large black poodle with a Mephistopheles expression" who (in October 1844), by finding two "runners" for "the Shirra," introduced him first to its owner, the famous deer-stalker and naturalist of Morayshire and the Muckle Hart.

This dog was Mr. St. John's well-beloved "Grip," whose skull was afterwards buried in its master's grave. Mr. Innes says, "I never saw so perfect a dog for retrieving, but he was not handsome."

But a Labrador, a black Labrador, is surely the handsomest of all the dogs that ever picked a partridge. He is so satin-smooth and aristocratic. He is so swift and so tireless. He can swim like a trout. He is so eager and so tractable. He is so wise and so affectionate. He is so courageous and yet so peace-loving. His broad brow and mild eyes are Philosophy's own. And see him on a "runner" in an acreage of roots! Why, he hunts with the drive and fling of a foxhound! And when, anon, he comes to hand with your cock pheasant, he carries it, even at the gallop, as discreetly as a family butler who bears porcelain.

There are "golden" Labradors, there are also "cream" Labradors;

## THE LABRADOR RETRIEVER

and very lovely they are and very good dogs too, up to (so some people say) lunch time; and yet there is only one Labrador, and he is black.

And how did he *begin*? Thirty years ago we wondered when we met him at a shooting-party; now we wonder when we do not. But Labradors began longer ago than these six lustres. About the year 1850 Newfoundland dogs began to be brought by sea-faring men to this country. Wildfowlers in the neighbourhood of Poole Harbour were first to recognise the capabilities of the newcomer and to use him as a retriever of the Little Stints, the Knots and the what-nots that wildfowlers shoot, and which are so prone to fall into the sea. And ten years later a smaller variety of Newfoundland began to appear. These dogs were black and smooth, and besides being the born water-dog, they were plucky, hardy and highly intelligent, and soon showed themselves ready and willing to face the thickest of thorn, the most octopus of bramble, in search of their masters' game.

There can be small doubt that these St. John Newfoundland dogs were now crossed, for nose, with setters and pointers. Next time that you ask "Shot" to pick a grouse for you, watch him at work, and it is ten to one that he will finish his hunt by freezing into a point, a momentary point, in front of the bird that he is to gather, especially if the latter happens to be down in long heather. In this you shall see the setter, and, by the occasional white splash on his breast, the occasional white toe, you shall trace earlier ancestry still, and hark back to the gentle forebears of "Lanny's" *Member of the Humane Society*.

Thus it was that the retriever became a recognised breed of dog, with a place in the shooting world. But the Labrador as we know him to-day, the so-called pure Labrador, first, I think, began to be when Mr. Holland Hibbert bred and brought him to field trial, about the year 1890.

Even then he was an unconscionable long time in finding fame and favour. But with the appearance, shortly before the war years, of the dapper and dashing "Peter," Peter of Faskally, it was evident that the Labrador had come to stay, that the faster, smaller, better-



## THE LABRADOR RETRIEVER

balanced, but equally hardy and reliable, dog was to oust the old, crusted "curly coat," to walk over from the "wavy" or "flat." And here he sits in the butt and the ben with you, and I think you'll ask no other.

But let you, and all who love him, have a care. Ask yourself what you want a retriever *for*. Why (you'll say), to find *runners* for me, to find the game I cannot find *myself*. Exactly so, my son; so never you put mere *steadiness* and *style* before nose, stamina and keenness to hunt and find.

What applies to the foxhound applies every whit as much to the retriever. What did Major Whyte Melville sing of his "Bachelor," "King of the Kennel"?

"So eager to find and so gallant to draw,  
A wilder in covert a huntsman ne'er saw,  
'Twas a year and a half e'er he'd listen to law;"

and I would rather—a hundred times rather—take the field with a dog that I must wear upon a slip when the tall pheasants fall about him, the big, brown hares come lolloping by, and that yet, when bidden to "hie lost" on a strong runner, delivers the goods again and again. Yes, a hundred times would I prefer him to pick up for me in covert, or to breed from in kennel, before the rock-steady field-trial fellow who comes back and says, "Please, I can't find it, Mister," and sits down all rock steady again.

When you buy a Labrador to be your personal gun-dog, how do you begin? You may answer advertisements in *The Field*; you may write to breeders of repute. But it is no bad way to ask leave to watch the pickers-up at a real big covert shoot. You will meet, behind the guns, gamekeepers and professional handlers who are working young dogs, many of which are for sale. You will be able, unobserved, to see your fancy tried out on all sorts of chances and in cover of all kinds. You will see how he faces the thick stuff, you will see him in water, you will note if he has keenness, perseverance and a nimble nose. If these three things are his, and if, when on a runner, he leaves it not at all for the bolting bunny or any other sudden distraction,

## THE LABRADOR RETRIEVER

then you may ask questions about him. And you may ask them and regard not his delivery, his speed, or that he is prone to chase when not hunting, and disinclined to come to whistle when he is. You may ask if he (he will not be while he is under two years), or his parents, are prone to eczema—an unsightly disadvantage, but one which diet will do much for.

You may ask if he has had distemper. If he has not, then thirty shillings (thanks to Sir Theodore Cook) will nowadays, by inoculation, make him immune. You may ask if he is a good doer—not that it really matters, though a dainty feeder, sometimes, means a delicate dog.

You may inquire if he is good-tempered with other dogs, especially when in motor-cars (but Labradors, as a rule, are all gentleness and peace). If he is *not*, forget him.

Lastly, you may ask his price. And attach, in reason, no importance to it. If you have met the young dog you fancy, and who fancies you, buy him. An extra twenty pounds spread over eight working years, or more, of love, companionship and pride in possession is no sum to consider at all. And every time that a friend says, as “Shot” (perhaps a little grey about the muzzle now) comes back with the runner that his own paragon, and all the other dogs, have failed on—yes, every time that he says, “A damned marvel, that old devil of yours!” why, there’s the interest on your capital, and at a thousand per cent.

So, my son, in Labradors, as in life, ever prefer brilliance in performance to a humdrum steadiness, which, though highly respectable, is forever humdrum, humdrum.

## TO A VERY YOUNG LABRADOR LADY

*Black as coal and bright as pin,  
Soft and silken and innocent,  
Soon for you shall things begin—  
Things by the High Gods meant;  
What is "feather" and what is "fur"?  
What is "retrieved right up to hand"?  
Matters that certainly shall occur  
Just as the Gods have planned.*

*Over the lawn the red leaves run,  
Frolic and chase a few, a few;  
Worry a cushion or wink in the sun,  
Same as the lap-dogs do—  
Same as the Peke who goes his ways,  
Tawny-curled as chrysanthemum,  
King of the drawing-room all his days,  
Where never the Wood Gods come.*

*Dig you deep in the border brown,  
Swallow a tithe of poppy roots,  
Then, past the pantry, and lay you down  
Where they clean the shooting-boots;  
Lick the dubbin most tentative,  
Eat of the mud on the fragrant floor,  
Then dream the dreams that the good Gods give  
Who made you a Labrador.*

*Dream and wake with a heart in pledge  
To the tap of a stick on stock,  
To the lift of a covey across a hedge,  
And the line of the pheasant cock  
That shall beat your Dad and his muzzle hoar;  
Yet you, you'll hold it along the ditch,  
And win a pat on the head therefor  
And the wonderful words, "Good bitch!"*

TO A VERY YOUNG LABRADOR LADY

*Soft as silk and bright as pin,  
Shinier far than the satin's sheen,  
Puppy, soon shall things begin—  
Things that the Wood Gods mean;  
What is "feather" and what is "fur"?  
What is "right up, right up to hand?"  
Things that certainly shall occur—  
Things that the Gods have planned.*



# THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER









## THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER

A GOLDEN RETRIEVER, "in spite of a deceptive similarity of sound," is never a golden, or yellow, *Labrador*. In fact, a Golden Retriever is not a retriever at all, in that he has naught of the Labrador, or of the setter, to his make-up. Nor even a pinch of poodle. Indeed, he is just a dog—a delightful dog—that fetches things for you. He is a blunt-looking, four-square sort of dog, in a coat of pale gold. And I've heard say that the paler the gold the better the dog.

But, though he is so sturdily built, he is something soft, and certain Golden (not yours or mine, of course) may, after a hard morning, be glad to go home to the drawing-room sofa. On a warm day he will drink a brook dry, and want of water, in the sultry September weather, will stop him hunting. So never, on a hot day, go to a barren and thirsty downland where no water is without a bottled supply of brook and a basin, or pannikin, from which a dog can lap at ease. The small trouble of carriage is amply repaid by the comfort of the dog and by his better working. And this will apply not only to your Golden Retriever, but also to your Labrador, your spaniel and to your gun-dogs in general.

A Golden Retriever has, by gift of the gods, a beautiful mouth, and in delivery he is usually a sort of canine Carter Paterson. *And* his cleverness! When I turn over *The Field* newspaper on a Saturday night, and the intriguing words, "A Clever Retriever" catch my eye, I guess, or ever I read the paragraph, that the dog which a proud owner boasts in the printed page is a Golden dog. And I am never wrong.

I think that a Golden Retriever is the only gun-dog that ever I saw employed as a tracker in a deer forest. And a useful dog he was, for he had the excellent nose which is common to his kind. But he was without the collie's *herding* instinct and without, so I was told, the far-reaching *yap* of the sheep-dog when his stag was held to bay.

## THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER

And for these reasons I cannot think, as do many better men than I, that the Golden Retriever owes to the collie his lion sable and the comb and waving feather of his stern.

When one considers the antiquity of the spaniel type, from which all kinds of dogdom, gun-dogdom, spring in some form or another, the Golden Retriever is a *parvenu* of some brief seventy years' standing. And the extraordinary thing is that he just occurred like a mushroom, and no man knows, for certain, the how or the why of his coming.

The late Sir Hilary Saxmundham, in his *Diary of a Sportsman*, mentions that my Lord Panmure owned a "wavy-coated, straw-coloured retrieving dog" at his "castle near Carnoustie" (Panmure House?) in 1865. And, writing in 1877, Sir Hilary refers back to this dog "Tarf" again, and says how comparatively common the type is becoming.

"Delicate dogs," the diarist calls these "straw-coloured" retrievers, and suited (he says) to "the terrace rather than to the turnips."

Now where Obscurity is, is also Curiosity. And Curiosity begets Rumour and Romance. And I may perhaps repeat, without undue plagiarism, the rather charming episodes to which, says Mr. Charles Gunter in his *Gun-Room Brevities* (Spottiswoode 1882), the Golden Retriever owes his genesis.

When Harry Hieover, whose charger had (as Harry put it) "simply galloped into a cannon-ball and eternal cat's meat," started to walk back from Balaclava, he passed a Russian gun. The soldiers who had worked it would never work gun again, but about them whimpered and ran a biggish, blunt-nosed, wavy-coated puppy. A cream-coloured puppy.

"Hullo, old fellow!" said Harry, who was fond of dogs. But the cream-coloured puppy, tail tucking and bristling, backed away from him. "Don't you be a fool," said Harry, and with some difficulty he caught the derelict, and, when he had tied a bit of gun-cotton, or something, to its collar, the Muscovite followed without further ado.

Out of compliment to the country of its birth, Harry christened his



## THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER

puppy "The Vod Cur." And Harry's batman, Tom Spurrier, taught "Voddy" an infinity of tricks. For the pup was an intellectual pup, and learnt a thing "as easy," Tom said, "as drink a pint."

"And," said Tom to his gentleman before so long, "I'd be saying that that there dog has the makings of a *shooting*-dog, sir—fetches and carries like egg-shells, he do. And instinc'! Bless me, sir, he wouldn't leave Bandsman Partridge all day yesterday. Couldn't make it out, I couldn't, sir. 'Voddy' never took no 'eed of Joe Partridge before. And then—why, sir, I recollected that it was the first o' September. *There's* instinc' for you, sir!" And Harry said yes, that there indeed it was.

Now no soldier—soldiers being the born fanciers—can resist an attractive dog. And somehow or another "Voddy" got smuggled on board a home-going boat by someone who ought to have known better than to steal.

And on shipboard "Voddy" was purchased from his appropriator by an officer of Her Majesty's Brigade of Guards, who at Portsmouth told a drummer to lead the dog to the South-Western station.

But Drummer Duff—he was but a little boy—stopped to see a Punch-and-Judy show. And when Mr. Punch was hanged, Dicky Duff found that "Voddy" was no longer at the end of his string. And what Ensign Sir Digby Wildrake said when the loss of his dog was reported to him, the author of *Brevities* does not repeat, and therefore I cannot tell you. But certainly "Voddy" was gone.

Now, after the fall of Sevastopol, a peace was signed and the soldiers came home. And one day Tom Spurrier (who, you will remember, was—as he still was—Harry Hieover's batman, and who had loved "Voddy" next best thing after Harry) took his young lady to see a circus. And there was a dog there called "Toots, the Canine Comedian, who can do everything except Talk."

"Dam' good thing for somebody that he *can't* talk," said Tom. "Cos why, my girl? 'Cos that's the Captain's 'Voddy' that was stolen off of us—'im I told you of, Em'ly. See 'ere——" And Tom whistled on his fingers—three staccato notes.

## THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER

Thereupon the Canine Comedian, who was just going to jump through a paper hoop, jumped instead into, and out of, the half-crown seats with the red cloth on them, scampered over the shilling benches and landed, *bang*, in the sixpennies and Tom's arms! And Emily (Mr. Gunter says) was just as nearly jealous of a dog as a really sensible and sound young woman could be.

And the police arrived, and, later, Captain Hieover and some other young gentlemen from the Cavalry Barracks. And presently the Captain wrote a stiffish cheque to buy his own dog with. And thus it was that "Voddy" came back to the Colours.

Now when Harry Hieover went to hunt with the Ranston he was most immensely taken by the painstaking and exemplary way in which Lord Wolverton's gentle tan-and-golden hounds held to, and puzzled out, a line. And the Ranston hounds hunted only their friends the tame paddock deer, and hunted for the scent, and not for any worry at all, and showed the most splendid of good galloping and good hound-work by "the flooded Stour."

And Harry, who loved hound-work, had a great notion. And he told it to my Lord when he met him at White's, not so long afterwards. And my Lord said, "I'll send you a bitch of our next draft, Harry, and you can see for yourself; dessay you'd get a very decent retriever—'Voddy's' brains and our noses, eh?"

So when next you see a pale-gold, wavy dog make very good indeed on a cock pheasant which even your own black "Sam" has failed to collect, you can say, "That's the Ranston 'Ruby'—the bloodhound."

And when you get home along and the same straw-coloured fellow fetches your slippers from upstairs and, presently, wafting a plumed feather of stern and stepping like a cat, softly and with circumstance indicates the way to the armchairs, a tea-table and a pink sugar cake or so, you'll say, "And *this* is 'Voddy,' the Moscovite Circus Dog, dashed if it isn't!"

And, for my part, I'd never be surprised if you were, in both surmises, absolutely correct.



THE MIDAS TOUCH  
(THE GOLDEN RETRIEVER)

*The Golden Retriever, I'd say for a start,  
Is as gold as a guinea in every part—  
Oh, he's golden of jacket and golden of heart!*

*In deportment he's golden—the Chesterfield strain—  
How he sits upon sofas again and again!  
How he steps down like golden hidalgos of Spain!*

*Yet he'll wink and, at once, to a waggersy stoop  
For his grand-dads were dogs who could jump through a hoop  
And bring down the house in a hippodrome troupe.*

*And, out on the manor, he's very renowned,  
He will work like a beaver, and hunt like the hound  
That is golden and lop-eared, his nose to the ground.*

*The nose that's been his since, in Midas mode, Harry  
Imagined gold dogs that could fetch and could carry,  
And then thought of "Ruby" for "Voddy" to marry.*

*And here is their grandpup, who's gold as can be,  
To pick up my partridge, or come home to tea  
And, golden as Silence, share firesides with me.*



# THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER









## THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER

NOTHING (says "Stonehenge," ignoring "Ramrod's" *Tour*) seems to be known of the history of this dog. And this is what "Stonehenge" said in 1882, when the Curly-coat was common form as a gamekeeper's dog and, frequently, the beloved familiar of old-fashioned shooting squires.

There is, for instance, a portrait of the late Mr. Frank Streatfield of Chiddingstone, along with his dog "Waller." As typical an old Curly-coat, is "Waller," as his master is a typical old English gentleman, and it shocks me to think that the artist (Mr. Streatfield's daughter) has called her portrait, "The Two Worst Poachers in Kent."

And in this affectionate funning there would be, I think, some little *souçon* of fact. For the Curly-coat was—is—among shooting-dogs a character. And he is always remembered, in my recollections of him, anyhow, as a sort of freebooting wag, and prone to gather the birds of other people.

He had a temper, too, sometimes, he was quarrelsome with other dogs, and he had a mouth like a mantrap only too generally. But always he had a faith in, and a devotion to, his often tyrant (I've said that he was the usual keeper's dog) that neither curses could wither nor custom (the habitual kick in the ribs) stale.

And for rough wear there never was nor will be a dog to beat him. He was tireless on the steep, blue August Grampian; he was unbeatable over the wide acres of arable Norfolk. No day was too long for him, no task too hard. And when the long days and the hard days followed each other like a skein of wild geese, would a week of them, or a month of them, get to the bottom of him? Never in his life or yours.

But it was in water that he was the black pearl. His coat was made to get wet in, and afterwards to sit in, breast to the biting

## THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER

weather, the snow flurries freezing on his tight, elastic curls, and his ear and eye cocked, as keenly as those of his master, to hear the far-off gaggle on the gale.

He had a wonderful nose, too, and some of the finest bits of retrieving that ever I saw have been the work of the Curly-coat. Give him time and an active runner, a cock pheasant for choice, and he made magic again and again.

I was brought up on him, and he figures in all my earliest shooting memories. He was a powerful dog, and he seemed to enjoy the jumping of five-barred gates with a big brown hare in his mouth.

And, if I recollect aright, he, by habit, started to hunt with a few funny frog leaps (the origin of which you shall hear), as though he first would try for a view of his game. But he'd get his muzzle down almost at once, and never get it up again until he held his bird in it.

He was a crotchety old devil, too. There was "Nile," perhaps the best game-finder that I ever knew, "Nile," who hated grooms and coachmen in buckskins, for those were buckskin days. "Nile" once went so far as to pull the seat out of a pad-groom's breeches as the man stooped to help himself to Irish stew at a shooting luncheon. A prejudice this one of poor "Nile's," which ended in a tragedy so terrible that I cannot write of it.

But best I remember the clowning. I can see an elderly game-keeper who has gone to a rabbit hole to listen for a too-lingering ferret. But he hears a premonitory rumble, and minces softly back to his post like a ballet-dancer. Behind him comes his grey-muzzled, curly-coated dog, who imitates the Agag gait of his master to the very life.

I can see a huge black beast, "Pop" is his name, who has just swum the Esk river twice and again to find a mythical partridge that an imaginative sportsman declares to be down. "But I know its down," urges the Gun. For the fourth time "Pop" is bidden "seek a-toor,"

## THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER

and over he goes. Presently we see him pounce into a tussock and return. "He's got *something*," the observant say, as "Pop" approaches, huge and black as a thunder-cloud, his great head held low, his tremendous jaws carefully closed, his yellow eyes uplifted in a hideous squint. "Come awa' wi' it, noo," says his master, "*fine muckle dog!*" Then the cavern yawns, and forth, as from the fabled mountain, hops a field-mouse that scurries, unhurt, into the segs. The imaginative man is the first to laugh.

And, once more, I see a curly humorist who, after the grouse drive, finds, with an inimitable air, the two or three plucked and scrawny cockerels, reach-me-downs off the poulterer's pegs, with which the red heather around a certain butt has been previously "salted."

And I see "Merlin," "Merlin" who gallops back, back by several holes on the links at St. Andrews, to fetch a forgotten golf club. He has first been bidden, by his master, to sniff my handkerchief, that he may make no mistake about my putter. And back "Merlin" comes, bless him, with the paper that has been round my new "gutty."

But the second time it is the putter that he brings. And I never remember "Merlin" and that golf-ball wrapper without a notion (based upon the oft-accepted theory of "Goldie's" old "Grouse in the Gun-room") that "old Grouse" was none other than a Curly-coated Retriever.

But, these saturnine good fellows and faithful sportsmen, how *did* they begin?

Why, most knowledgeable people think, basing their opinion on that of the author ("Ramrod") of "*Ramrod's Sporting Tour* (1822), that the Curly-coated Retriever was first bred at Tredington in Worcestershire, and "Cherchez 'Toutou,'" they add.

And "Toutou," you know, was the famous black French poodle of Vicomte Emil le Gai of the Lancers of the Guard. And the Vicomte, says "Ramrod," was one of the first French prisoners brought to

## THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER

England (and sent inland to Worcestershire) in the Napoleonic wars, and with him, for those were the easy days, came "Toutou."

And one day (I read in "Ramrod") "Toutou" and his master, who (as a brave soldier, a nobleman and A.D.C. to Ney himself) was allowed parole, went for a walk. And some coltish villagers set the fighting dog of one Soames, a grazier, on to poor "Toutou" because, forsooth, he and his master were Froggies.

But "Toutou," who was as quick and cunning as he was brave, caught "Cupid" (for such was the Worcestershire dog's unchristian and inappropriate name) by the fore-paw, and so left the latter little to lay hold on except the thick, impenetrable coat of curls on "Toutou's" neck and shoulders.

How the fight would have ended neither I nor "Ramrod" know, because "The Quality," as exemplified by a party of shooters, occurred from out of a neighbouring stubble. Whereupon the rustics picked up their dog and made off.

A distinguished-looking gentleman now apologised to the French soldier for the behaviour of his countrymen and, patting "Toutou," asked if the latter was *habile* at tricks. So the Vicomte said, "Yais, *ma foi*, yais, sir," and kissed his hand in the air. And "Toutou" did some tricks.

And the distinguished-looking gentleman gave "Toutou" a sugar biscuit out of the luncheon panniers which a led pony carried. And the Vicomte told that "Toutou" could do more than mere tricks—that he could make the retrieve of the partridge. "Then," said the gentleman, "'Toutou' can do more than *my* dogs can, since there's not an atom of scent *ce matin*, Monsieur. But," he added, "be obliging enough to let 'Toutou' try for a runner which Lord Archibald here (you're sure it's down, Archie?) shot just now. You will? I'm monstrous obleeged to you."

So "Toutou" was told, in French, and he jumped, like a frog, several times, and then dashed off on a line, and presently back he



## THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER

trotted with the runner, which was dead, because "Toutou's" mouth was a hard one.

Nevertheless, it was "Bravo, 'Toutou,'" with a vengeance and with yet another sugar biscuit, and would the Vicomte care to carry a gun and, later, join the sportsmen at lunch?

But the Vicomte did not care to carry a gun, but he, and "Toutou," would be happy to accompany the party and to drink a glass of wine with it presently. So they all went into Newman's barley, and Vicomte Emil heard the Englishman, his guests and his servants, encourage the dogs to "Hie-seek."

So he told his "Toutou" to do the same, but since he was, as yet, not at ease in our idiom, he said (did not the village children say so?), "Hide seek, 'Toutou,' hide seek."

But "Toutou" trotted up to the gentleman who had given him the sugar biscuits and sat down and looked at him. Moisture trickled from "Toutou's" moustache.

"*Imbécile!*" cried the Vicomte Emil le Gai.

"Excuse me," said the biscuit gentleman, "a monstrous clever dog: obeyed orders minutely, 'set' me as soon as you said 'Hide'—eh, Bagwell?"

"'E did do, Sir 'Yde," said the gamekeeper, laughing very heartily at his master's simple jest; "us should *breed* from a dog like that, Sir 'Yde—put 'im to our best bitch, Sir 'Yde!"

"I do not compre'end," said Vicomte Emil.

But he understood when he was told that the gentleman who had given "Toutou" a biscuit was famous as a British Admiral, and that his name was Sir Hyde Parker, and that he was on short leave. And also that, though Sir Hyde was famous as a sailor, he was even more celebrated as a Worcestershire squire and the owner of a renowned kennel of gun-dogs.

And then it was lunch-time.

But I ought to say that Bagwell's best bitch was a roomy, liver, spaniel lady called "Belle." And that of her next litter some were

## THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER

red, like her, and some black, like "Toutou." But, red or black, all were curly, and all were clever as sin. And so, you will find, are their descendants, if ever you have the good fortune to own a Curly-coat Retriever—a black curly-coat or a red.

But, as "Ramrod" (who must not be confused with "Nimrod," whom he plagiarises, I fear) and I have told you, the Curly-coat's brains, his hardiness, his cynical humour, his curls, his frog-fondness for water, and his frog jumping, all come from "Toutou," the Froggy French Poodle.



## WATERPROOF

### (THE CURLY-COATED RETRIEVER)

*His brow is so spacious  
He looks so sagacious,  
The very owdacious  
Old workman is he,  
And out late and early,  
A black dog and burly,  
And coated as curly  
As corkscrews can be;*

*When scent is all tricky,  
When cover is thick, he  
Can pick any dicky-  
Bird, titled as game,  
That you, Sir, can slaughter;  
But it's in cold water  
(His wig twisting tauter)  
That most he wins fame;*

*Since to curls unmonastic  
But closely elastic  
No weather's too drastic,  
His clusters are none  
That rainstorms can raggle  
Or haggle or draggle,  
Agog for the gaggle,  
He sits by the Gun;*

*And let tides as they will race  
Away like a mill-race,  
Shall your game, in their chill race,  
Go out on the floods?  
Nay, a dog, black and curly,  
With curls that are twirly,  
Bobs back through the hurly—  
Green water, white suds;*

## WATERPROOF

*With a goose that is big and  
A shake of his wig (and  
The diamond drops jig and  
Jump off him like rain,  
The pearly drops glisten)  
He's landed, "Here's this 'un,"  
Says he, "Now, let's listen  
For gaggles again."*

*Down he sits, oh, let none err,  
The dog that's the one-er  
To wait, with the gunner,  
The fowl off the sea—  
A black dog, a burly,  
Whose black coat is pearly  
With raindrops and curly  
As corkscrews can be!*

THE WAVY- (OR FLAT-) COATED  
RETRIEVER









## THE WAVY- (OR FLAT-) COATED RETRIEVER

LONG ago, when wheat and barley were mowed by the sickle, and stubble *was* stubble and stood nearly knee high, and squires wore green cutaways and white beavers and began to shoot partridges and drink old ale at six a.m. on the first of each September—ah, *those* were the days! Days of muzzle-loading guns, and three gamekeepers to load them for you—did you shoot a match, or even were you just enjoying yourself as a gentleman ought to enjoy himself and did. Days, too, of powder-flasks and pointers, shooting-ponies, setters and—retrievers, you say, of course? I have mentioned retrievers. No? But indeed I have, because our ancestors' retrieving was usually done for them by the dog who pointed, or set, the covey in the first instance.

And imagine, for a moment, how difficult, how dreadfully difficult, it must have been to keep a retriever-pointer, or a retriever-setter, steady to point or "down charge" when it knew it was, presently, to pick up a partridge or so! What miles of whipcord must have been wasted, what weight of words, what whistle-blasts! But so it was, and so it continued to be for a hundred years and more.

Now it was the barque *Polestar* that put into Poole Harbour early on the eighth of August, 1840. She was from Quebec with a cargo of deals. George Culpepper was her master. And Captain Culpepper, besides being master of the *Polestar*, was master of a biggish black dog with a dash of white to him, a dog who would come running aft from the galley whenever Captain George sang out, "'Snowball', where the hell are you?"

When *Polestar* was alongside, our captain went below. And there he shaved and washed himself as much as he considered to be necessary. He then put bear's grease on his forelock, his best blue reefer on his

## THE WAVY- (OR FLAT-) COATED RETRIEVER

back, sang out "Snowball, where the hell are you?" and went ashore with the black dog at his heels.

When Captain Culpepper was within, under the sign of "The Blackamoor," a landsman asked him, "What kind of a dog might that 'un be, Mister Sailor?"

"Comes out o' New Found Land, my son," said the mariner; "they uses 'em to catch fish with there."

"Ho, indeed," said the stay-at-home. "And what kind of fish would they catch, now?"

"Salmon," said the skipper.

"Gammon," said the other.

"If you'd a salmon here," said the captain, "I'd show you fast enough, my lad. Why, some o' these dogs has webbed feet, just like a bloody duck, and——"

"Well, let's see him fetch a walking-stick out o' the harbour, anyhow."

So out the company clattered and stamped, and "Snowball" barked with excitement, and jumped twenty feet, *splash* into the deep green water and retrieved an ashplant. Then, at a wave of the captain's arm, he swam two hundred yards to the steps, and ran up them all wet and wagging, and shook himself like diamonds, and brought the stick to hand as pretty as pretty.

Now there was a hard-bit elderly fellow with a gun and high boots on who stood a-by. His name was Master Samuel Wells, and he was a warm and educated man, and the head gamekeeper to Robert, tenth Lord Calebasse. He said, "Will that clever dick o' yours fetch birds as well as salmon, Captain?"

"Fetch any dam' thing," said Captain Culpepper proudly.

"Why, then," said Keeper Wells, "I've a couple o' geese down in the sea, and the tide's turned on 'em, and they'll be up Channel on me in next to ninepence."

So the company made one step of it over to the breakwater, and Samuel let "Snowball" sniff at a goose that he had in his game-bag.

## THE WAVY- (OR FLAT-) COATED RETRIEVER

"Fetch!" said the captain, waving a blue arm to the offing, and in jumped "Snowball," and the tide running like a mill-race.

The spectators watched a black head, that kept bobbing like a seal's, then, "He's got one of 'em!" cried the gamekeeper. And, sure enough, there was "Snowball" breasting the ebb with a great, fat, stubble-fed, grey lag in his mouth!

"Good damned dog!" said Captain Culpepper, who, like many seafaring men of the period, had a limited quantity of adjectives. "Snowball" wagged his tail and danced for joy, because he had never fetched a bird before.

"Fetch again," said his master, waving an arm. And *souse*, in went "Snowball" with a short, gruff bark and a most almighty spring; and away he swam, out to sea, until his round black head was lost in a tumble of green-and-white hillocks.

"Sure he's all right?" asked Master Wells, a little anxiously.

"Sartin of it, mate," said Captain Culpepper. And, even as he spoke, there was "Snowball" swimming, swimming like a cork, with Master Wells's second barrel.

"Now, Captain," said the gamekeeper, "you be pleased to come up to your dinner this day and tell did ever you taste such fare in foreign parts as a stubble-fed grey goose an' gravy an' baked potatoes?"

So the Captain and "Snowball" cast up at five p.m., and ate goose, and met Polly Wells, who was Samuel Well's daughter; and a very pretty girl she was, thought Captain Culpepper, and as good as she was pretty.

And "Snowball," crunching the drum-stick that Polly had given him, thought so too.

And, since *Polestar* had to be in Poole for a week at least, Captain George (oh, but of course he was a bachelor) had plenty of time to fall in love with Polly, and Polly with him. And it was settled that they should be married when next the Captain came home.

But before the barque got her anchor up, Polly said, "George, darling, you'll have to leave 'Snowball' with me—because—oh, well, because you'd be certain to come back for *him!*"

## THE WAVY- (OR FLAT-) COATED RETRIEVER

"You *are* a blessed *one*," said George, fatuously.

But he left "Snowball" behind, as Polly had said. And "Snowball" had most tremendous fun fetching ducks and geese for Master Wells, and, on one occasion, a most beautiful, wild, white swan.

And "Snowball" and his sensational doings became the talk of all the sport-loving gentlemen in sport-loving Hampshire. And in my lord's kennel was a lovely black-and-tan setter lady called "Bess." And when "Bess" had puppies, "Snowball" was the sire of them. And the puppies, who were as black as jet, had most beautiful wavy coats. And my Lord Calebasse had Master Wells train them (but they did not require much teaching) exclusively to retrieve, and from that day forward he never permitted a pointer of his, or a setter of his, to pick up a partridge any more.

And when "Bess's" pups, in their turn, had families, my lord called them Wavy-coated Retrievers, and gave specimens of them to the dukes and noble marquises who were his friends.

And thus it was that the Wavy-coated Retriever came to all the best manors in England and north of the Tweed—a lovely, high-couraged dog, of the gentlest and most devoted. And a dog, too, of noble intelligence and of mouth most silken. And when that dog, slowly and surely, put his nose down to a runner, the runner was as good as in the bag.

But, somehow or another, his wavy coat got to be called a flat coat, and he himself to be known as the Flat-coated Retriever—because, I suppose, his coat was, and is, and always will be, wavy.

But what's in a name if you love your master better than your life, better than your very dinner, and stick to a line for him until the cows come home?

And these two things are just what the Flat-coats did, and what, indeed, they still do.



*WHEN SQUIRES WERE SQUIRES*  
(THE WAVY- (OR FLAT-) COATED RETRIEVER)

*In days devoid of hurry  
And leisurely of life,  
When squires were squires in Surrey  
And lairds were lairds in Fife,  
Or ever cars ran hooting  
Or maids desired to vote,  
No gentleman went shooting  
Without a Wavy Coat;*

*Up in the morning early,  
Their titled ways men took,  
In whiskers, combed and curly,  
In Billy Coke (or Cook),  
To manors (with a rental  
That gave the squire his due),  
And, bold and black and gentle,  
The Wavy Coats went too;*

*There grand-dads, hale and Tory,  
Rammed powder home and shot;  
There Youth, in all its glory,  
Breathed, "Breech-loaders—why not?"  
But, ramrod in the barrel,  
Or cartridge in the breech,  
In wavywise apparel  
Would be the dog of each.*

*For, where the gun was frequent  
From Frant to John o' Groats,  
No nose as sure, hie-seek, went  
As his—old Wavy Coat's;  
In mustard and in mangels  
He stuck to lines like wax—  
To lines and tortuous angles  
That Euclid's self might tax!*

## WHEN SQUIRES WERE SQUIRES

*Men say his day is over,  
They add that pace and style  
In covert, corn and clover  
Can beat him by a mile,  
And that his case is cave,  
The Labrador, and that  
His coat, that once was Wavy,  
Has fallen very Flat!*

*Yet when I go, at hearty  
Invites (per Dreamland posts),  
To join a shooting-party  
Of dear be-whiskered ghosts  
On manors with a rental  
To pay a squire his due,  
Then, wise and black and gentle,  
A Wavy Coat comes too.*





# THE CLUMBER SPANIEL







## THE CLUMBER SPANIEL

ONCE upon a time there was a celebrated sportsman and shooting gentleman who was called William Tell. The one who shot apples in the Alps? The same. And when this William went out shooting, it is said that he took with him a team of spaniels, yellow-and-white spaniels, and more white than yellow. These dogs, and their yellow-and-white ancestors before them, had had to go up hills so continuously that the climbing had made them just a little bit *slow*. And they were also rather bigger and heavier dogs than are the usual spaniels. And it was well that they were, for, occasionally, their master shot chamois instead of apples.

About the year 1749 a brace of these foreigners, a brace of these white-and-gold mountaineers, arrived in Yorkshire. One was called "Wilhelm" and the other "Wilhelmina." And there stepped up a crop-eared fellow of a fighting bull-mastiff. And he looked saucy at "Wilhelmina" and said "Eh, lass?" And poor "Wilhelm," who wasn't half the mastiff's weight, had (because, foreigner though he was, he was a gentleman) to up and ask him not to.

So the bull-mastiff ate "Wilhelm," and while he did so (only it did not take him long) "Wilhelmina" ran away and became lost. But she was found by one Johnny Rigg.

And who was Johnny Rigg an' all? Why, Johnny Rigg was a ranger, and a ranger is much the same thing as a gamekeeper. And this Johnny Rigg was not only a kind man, but he knew a likely-looking bitch when he saw one. And so he kept "Wilhelmina" to mouch about with him after "ta' muirfowl"—for so Johnny called the red grouse.

And "Wilhelmina," ungratefully misremembering "Wilhelm," made a *mésalliance* by, in fact, marrying a weasel-bodied, bandy-legged Basset Hound.

But her puppies were most delightfully fat and cuddlesome to see,

## THE CLUMBER SPANIEL

and, though nobody could say what sort of breed they were, they all went to good and highly appreciative homes. Johnny Rigg, however, kept a couple of them for his own use, and taught them to be real canny and confidential gun-dogs—"goon-dogs," Johnny called them.

And "Wilhelmina's" puppies flourished. They were steady, they did not hunt much faster than you could kick your hat along, their noses were excellent, and they were big enough dogs to carry a whacking great brown meadow hare without inconvenience, while to lift a heavy old cock pheasant and come galumphing in with it was, as Johnny said, "like a little holiday to 'em."

And, one October day, when Johnny was out *gooning* and his dogs worked, oh, extremely thoroughly, a bit of rough stuff by the roadside, a gilded coach posted by at the gallop.

In the coach was an elderly aristocrat and sportsman, who bade his blue-and-silver postillions pull up, that he might witness the sport and see the work of the two strangers—the two slow, white dogs.

"Stap me vitals!" he exclaimed, "these dogs are well suited to a time o' life and a tendency to the gout. None o' your nasty, flashy devils *these*, to gallop all over the Riding and spring birds *roads* away! An I had such confidential tykes home to Clumber, damme, I could go on drinking port and shooting *too*, whereas——"

And, "Do they be your own dogs, my man?" he asked Johnny.

"Tha' Grace, they be," said Johnny.

"Then I will buy them from you," cried the Duke, for it was indeed he.

"Your Grace," said Johnny, "brass winna buy my dogs."

"Ecod!" exclaimed his Grace, "I like ye for it, fellow, but have 'em I must. Come, name a price."

"Mon," said Johnny stubbornly, "I tell thee brass winna buy them."

So the end of it was that Johnny Rigg entered the ducal service, and brought his dogs with him, and worked them to the Duke and his guests during the many seasons in which his Grace continued (thanks to "Wilhelmina" and her bandy-legged bridegroom) to shoot



## THE CLUMBER SPANIEL

pheasants and drink port and breed the big, slow, steady, stately white spaniels with the hound ears and eyes and the wonderful hound noses, the spaniels that men call Clumbers unto this very day.

And Clumbers remain the spaniels of the great shooting-families still, the aristocrats—the rather delicate aristocrats—of the spaniel breed. The team, for instance, in Mr. Binks's picture (and it looks, in spite of William Tell, in spite of the unfortunate affair of the Basset, as English as the oaks it is under) belongs, as you see, to the first gentleman in the land—and surely Sandringham ought to know?

The Clumber, moreover, looks as well, or almost as well, with two guns and a loader as does the Labrador. He looks the sahib. He is the steadiest of all the spaniels, the easiest to handle, the freest from chase, the least likely of the lot to disgrace you by a "run in."

Indeed, he is the only spaniel that I would care to take to, let us say, Markoverton on a big occasion—supposing always that my lord were to ask me there before Christmas.

I could feel, I think, reasonably confident that "William" (for so I should call my Clumber, out of compliment to the apple man and to the perfect little knight who cocked his beaver at the big bull-mastiff all those years ago), confident I should feel that "William" would remain "down" though it fairly *rained* cock pheasants.

And, if he *was* a bit slow to pick up, why, no Gun is supposed to gather for himself on the big days, but to pass on, quick march, to White Wood as soon as ever the beaters be out of Four Winds. And the men and the dogs behind the line can feed the game-cart.

And so "William" would march, doucely, along with me, looking mighty well bred and as wise as owls. And the Honourable Desmond Shute—who is, as you know, my Lord Markoverton's heir—would say, "That's an uncommon nice dog of yours, I often wish I wasn't so frightfully keen on Labradors, for I'd love to have a Clumber myself."

And thereat "William" would wag his tail very hard indeed, because the Honourable Desmond *knows* about dogs, and is, moreover, held to be the third best game shot in England, and as nice a young man as there is in the whole Brigade of Guards.



## THE NEXT BEST THING

(THE CLUMBER SPANIEL)

*If a dog were a difficult thing to choose,  
If ever it did occur  
That I'd question the kind of a dog to use  
To find me feather or fur,  
I would say again, what I've said before  
More times than ever a man can number,  
That, if it were not for a Labrador,  
I would certainly choose a Clumber.*

*A Clumber's manners are marvels—all,  
His motto is just "Obey,"  
He never runs in to a fall, at all,  
He never goes far away;  
When he sits to see where the high birds soar  
A "slip" is merely a useless lumber;  
Yes, if it were not for a Labrador,  
I would certainly want a Clumber.*

*When scent is thin and cover is thick,  
With a nose that nought can fog,  
To a line, though faint and fine, he'll stick,  
Will the slow, white, stately dog;  
So, though manor and moor be wintry hoar,  
Or asleep in a golden August slumber,  
If I didn't pick up with a Labrador,  
I would certainly need a Clumber.*

*Oh, did I not go with a mind made up,  
Oh, were I not sure as can be,  
I'd certainly train a Clumber pup  
To gather my game for me;  
So here I say what I've said before,  
And will say again while I've days to number,  
That, if it were not for a Labrador,  
A truly black, bluely-black Labrador,  
That, if I did not love a Labrador,  
I would certainly love a Clumber.*



# THE IRISH WATER SPANIEL









## THE IRISH WATER SPANIEL

**A**MONG all dogs—all the shooting-dogs, anyhow—he is the Antic. No dog, certainly no gun-dog, looks the least like him. He is red—but all dogs out of Erin are red—and he is ragged curly, but not in the woolly way that the Poodle is curly. His curls come down his front legs, like the tendrils of the vine, even unto the very bog that he trots on. And down his hind legs, too, are the red tendrils twining until they come to the hocks of him. But his face is bare as a baboon's.

And his top-knot falls between his amber eyes in one kiss-me-quick curl of which his owner is uncommon proud.

He is, because of "Maria," the most famous gun-dog in all literature. I could make a chaplet, or a chapter, of the pearls that have fallen from the pens of the Misses Somerville and Ross about "Maria." Yet I will steal only this one short string: "On shooting mornings, 'Maria' ceased to be a buccaneer, a glutton, and a hypocrite. From the moment when I put my gun together, her breakfast stood untouched until it suffered the final degradation of being eaten by the cats, and now in the trap she was shivering with excitement and agonising in her soul lest she should even yet be left behind."

But it is the tail of the ragged "Maria" dog that is the freak. For it goes as naked as broomsticks. And that is a ridiculous thing to see.

I do not suppose that one man in a hundred has shot to an Irish Water Spaniel. Yet the dog has the makings of as good a dog for the manor as for the bog or the saltings, for he is keen, courageous, and clever; also he is big enough and strong enough to be convenient with a heavy brown hare or a cock pheasant.

I have heard that he is the *ne plus ultra* of water-dogs, and, again, I have heard that he is not. The dogs that I have personally seen have been good, but no better than some retrievers are. But men

## THE IRISH WATER SPANIEL

say that when the Irish Spaniel is very good he is verily the best. And he's the hardy one. Yet I have heard that he sullen if scolded—but, then, so do I. It shows a sensitive soul, folk say, and I agree with them.

And, in the house—mind you, I have never lived in the same house as an Irish Water Spaniel—he has (I am told) one of the disadvantages that Mr. Kipling has discovered to the discredit of the “oont”: he smells (so it is said) “most awful vile.”

But, somehow, I always suspect the man who tells me that a dog smells. I suspect him of not keeping the same dog in health, cleanliness and work.

The Irish Water Spaniel is the great boy, but, in the nature of things, he is used chiefly for the wild-fowling. And poor wounded ducks and snipes and so ons do not run far or fast. And so the Patlander is rarely asked to do the scientific jobs that we ask of the Labrador or the Springer. How would he shape, our Irishman, on a pinioned cock pheasant well away in forty acres of woodland? How long would he delay the next drive before he found the running partridge with the ten minutes' start of him? I think that, maybe, he might surprise us in both emergencies, for he has that outstanding quality of which the great retrievers are made—he neither gives up nor gives in. But with this gift of perseverance must always go *keenness*. And the keen dog is always the difficult dog to handle. And that's what the Irishman usually is—difficult and impetuous.

Yet when you have your keen dog, your difficult dog, as managed as a merlin, why, there's your field-trial champion at once.

*Nose*, you ask? Well, I hold that a keen worker always has a nose—it's the nose that *makes* him keen, say I. It is the sense of smell, and the joy of it, that sends him to the hunting and holds him to it and will not be denied.

In a very delightful book of last season—*Good Gun-Dogs*—the author, Captain Hardy, says that *all* dogs have good noses. And that when they fail in performance it is because they have not been properly educated to use their powers. I love this book that Captain

## THE IRISH WATER SPANIEL

Hardy has written, but I do not know that I *want* to agree with him here. I like to think that I can try to breed a dog for *nose*—and that Providence, occasionally, allows me to be its finger, and crowns my efforts at match-making with a clinker. It is *agin* Nature, say I, for all noses to be equal.

Nor can I believe (for, if noses are equal, why not voices?) that, were I to be properly taught, I could sing in the same way as Mr. Kennerley Rumford sings, or Mr. Plunket Greene.

And talking of voices, what sort of a mouth has the red and ragged one? Hard enough, hard enough, I fear. But am I not basing this a little upon the immortal "Maria," who once, as we know, retrieved a snipe, clambered with it on to a tussock, crunched it twice and bolted it?

Well, perhaps I am, and, anyhow, a hard mouth is the most minor of matters in a good game finder.

"And how got he that bare tail of his?" I asked Tim Black, the "Sportsman," and he boasting the birth and antiquity of the wet dog who sat in the boat among the boots of us. "Larry" knew that we spoke of him and his tail, for he thumped it thrice upon the boards.

"Sure," said Tim, "they do tell you that, one time, 'twas the handle of the rag mop that the Lord tidied up with. But didn't He make a dog of it, after all?"

Then, as we drew to the reeds, the mop, as mops do, went into the water, once more, with a flop.







## MARIA

(THE IRISH WATER SPANIEL)

*When Genius makes a dog, then Genius takes  
Unto the task the elfin ink and pen,  
And makes, maybe, a dog to love, while men  
Love dogs and laughter and the bells it shakes;  
Thus, red, disreputable, wise as snakes,  
The immortal spaniel was; thus ever when  
Men name her name Maria, there and then  
They add that here's the dog that Genius makes.*

*Come, virtuous Rab! Come, Gelert, prince of dogs!  
Maria shares the crowns with you to-day  
(The crowns that bookmen but to you accord);  
Poor little pirate sportsman of the bogs  
Now leashed to the Elect, how must she pay  
The penalty of Greatness, greatly bored.*



# THE COCKER SPANIEL









## THE COCKER SPANIEL

**H**E is the smallest, and the prettiest, of all the recognised gun-dogs, and he comes from—where? And he began—when? Some say that Hidalgos of Spain, as his title implies, were first his masters, others that he came from China when the world began. Possibly he first became of the fashionables when he was—the merry little dog—accepted (on the introduction of Henrietta) at the Court of the Merry Monarch.

When I was young I knew a very old gentleman indeed who told (and the picture he so vividly made for a little boy has never faded), who told me that his grandfather had seen—and he a child—King Charles II, who walked, on a windy autumn day, in the Backs at Cambridge. And about His Majesty there hopped and capered a half-dozen of pretty little spaniels who chased the fallen leaves along and ran to retrieve a little red ball that the King's condescension tossed for their delight.

Now the King Charles dog was, no doubt, the beginning of things for the spaniel in His Majesty's realm, and I can never see a team of busy little Cockers without I'm picturing a salloy, stately Presence, in black satin and broad blue riband, a group of leering courtiers, the yellow leaf coming down, and a cry of merry little dogs who run hither and thither among an elegance of black-silk legs and high and august red heels.

A century and a half later, at Blenheim, a similar breed of small spaniels came to notice, and were, I believe, called, for the first time, "Cockers," or little dogs of use in flushing a woodcock. These little dogs, when small sporting spaniels became generally popular and various, remained as a distinct type, and were, and are, known as Blenheim spaniels.

The Blenheim spaniel is white and yellow, and round of head.

## THE COCKER SPANIEL

The Caroline dogs, as seen by my friend's grandsire, were black and white, and of the lively Cocker style as we know it to-day.

And a very attractive style it is, and one that, with the collaboration of a Labrador to do the heavy lifting, is the stand-by of the rough shoot.

And the Cocker will patter round the farm with you, or walk in Hyde Park, or hunt an October hedgerow to perfection. But, for an all-round shooting-dog, he is an impractical little darling.

And yet it is delightful to have a gun-dog small enough to sit, all muddily, on your knee coming home in the car. And, though his body is small, it has a heart that is big, and so the Cockers will continue to work the thick stuff for you till they wear as many prickles as a hedgehog and are as tired as a tree.

But you might as usefully expect a bumble bee to retrieve you a cock pheasant or a big brown hare as expect a little Cocker to lift the one or the other and bring it to your hand as though it were Mistress Nell Gwynne's glove.

The Cocker is a little dog with a warm heart, an excellent nose, a hard mouth and a mission in life. And his mission is rabbits, partridges, and an occasional grouse. He will, too, of obligation, live up to his name, and flush for you the one or two woodcock that you are likely to see this season, only they will both be out of shot.

For the Cocker is a headlong fellow, and, since he is a pet, he is self-opinionated, and laughs at whistles and loud cries. But once in a way he is a very good little dog indeed, and never works a hedge more than twenty yards ahead of his master, and obeys him, in reason, and kills rats for him like the stable terrier; yet, presently, fetches him a partridge as gingerly as all eggshells. Besides being as pretty as a picture and as busy and bustling as a bee.

I think it is just this combination of beauty and *busyness* that makes a Cocker such a jolly companion when he takes you out shooting. His ears flap so, his tail is so optimistic, his body is all a wriggling anticipation of the rabbit that he *knows* he is just about to bounce out for you.

## THE COCKER SPANIEL

And a rabbit (says he) is better than a woodcock any day in the week. What's the good of chasing a 'cock? *Flip*, it flies dodging; *flap*, and it's gone like a dream. And even if you caught it—*ugh!* who'd want to carry it? But a rabbit—ah, *now* you're talking!

And, when he says that, and lies down panting and lolling out a tongue as long as himself, you'll recollect that the Cocker is sealed to the rabbit by all the associations of Art and Poetry.

*Woodcock?* Fudge. Who was the first man in Poetry to go shooting? Mr. Bunting senior. And what did he go to shoot? A rabbit, as we all know. And with him, on that famous occasion, went a Cocker. And, if you want chapter and verse, I will refer you to Mr. Caldecott. What dog is that at Mr. B.'s heels? A Cocker? Certainly, a yellow-and-white Cocker—probably the sire of the very dog that founded his Grace of Marlborough's kennel. And look at him as he "runs in" (he would), and look at him as he dances about the Baby Bunting's furrier—a Cocker, a typical Cocker.

And still he is the merriest, busiest, prettiest little dog that ever went out shooting. And you will admit that more than three parts of the fun of missing rabbits is to have the raw material pushed out for you, in the best Bunting manner, by a Cocker, a yellow-and-white Cocker—three Cockers, if you will, all working at once, busy as bees, pretty as butterflies.

But if you want to know about Field-Trial Cockers, show-bench Cockers, rock-steady Cockers, you must read in other books than mine. For I can only tell you, with any certainty, of the merry little dogs with long ears who chased a red ball in the Backs, three hundred years ago, and brought it back to a merry, rather saturnine, gentleman in black satin (and a blue riband), and then went dancing, with the golden leaves, around his slim legs and on down the path into English history and out of my picture.



## KINGS AND COCKERS

### (THE COCKER SPANIEL)

*King Charles the Second,  
Like King Cole,  
Was always reckoned  
A merry soul;  
He had some very  
Little dogs, had he,  
Who were just as merry  
As he could be;*

*They were black-and-white,  
Their friends were Peers;  
Their eyes were bright,  
And they had long ears;  
When the King advanced  
And said, "I fegs,"  
The little dogs danced  
Round his black-silk legs.*

*To Mistress Nell's  
They likewise went,  
His spaniels,  
To their content;  
Small globes of gold  
They fetched again,  
Which Nellie rolled  
Down Drury Lane;*

*Sweet oranges,  
You see, and such  
Trifles as these  
Were just as much  
As dogs so small  
And white-and-black  
Could lift withal,  
And carry back;*

## KINGS AND COCKERS

*And that is why  
My little "Shot,"  
Though hard he'll try,  
Thinks hares a lot,  
And why also  
Your little "Rock"  
Can carry no  
Fat pheasant cock;*

But

*King Charles the Second  
Was like King Cole,  
And was always reckoned  
A merry soul;  
He loved his merry  
Little dogs, a whim  
In which we're very  
Much like to him.*





# THE SPRINGER SPANIEL







## THE SPRINGER SPANIEL

**T**HOUGH gunpowder goes back to, some say, the time of Moses, saltpetre was not employed for sporting purposes until comparatively modern days. And it is obvious that the sporting engines that first it served could only have availed to kill deer at the stalk, or to shoot sitting birds. And if you are to stalk deer or to shoot sitting partridges, a dog is a drawback rather than a desideratum.

There is, in the Tower, a beautiful sporting arquebus said to have been that of King Henry VIII, only I fancy that our eighth Henry probably preferred to it the arbalist of which he was so proficient a master—could he not shoot a buck with the arbalist at two hundred paces? And could you want to do much better than that even with a modern rifle?

Anyhow, long after venison may have been procured with an arquebus, winged game was being taken, seriously, in nets or, for the sport of it, by falconry. In both the latter ploys a dog was found to be useful. And that dog was, we know it from old records and pictures, a small dog, a spotted dog, a dog said to come from Castile, and called, consequently, a Spaniel.

This dog, though undoubtedly Spaniel in type, was trained *not* to spring birds, but to *point*, or *sit*, them.

In netting game, which was the purely commercial undertaking, a kite was used to keep the covey sitting and a questing Spaniel to mark its whereabouts. This done, the little dog dropped, and a drag net, carried on poles by a pair of varlets, was drawn over the whole brood of birds, which, after a wringing of necks, were sold to Brother Clement the Sacristan to serve as remove at the table of my Lord Abbot. And the only sportsman out was, of course, the Spaniel.

In game-hawking the same dog was employed. In this case "Diamond" the Peregrine or "Joan" the Ger, "waiting on," held the covey. The Spaniel found it, stood looking over his shoulder for

## THE SPRINGER SPANIEL

Simon Latham (Simon Latham was my Lord Frothingham's falconer, as you know), and Simon, running up, would flush the birds.

And then, as they rose, things all happened at once—"Diamond" (or "Joan") left her pitch like a thunderbolt, head-in-air lords and ladies galloped their palfreys, Simon shouted "Hola!" and "Tracie," the Spaniel dog, danced to see the sport, frisked to see so noble a flight.

But these good old days came to an end. Sporting guns—accursed devices and un-English, Simon said they were—began to begin. Now you will recollect that the man who shot with the gun must have a sitting mark to aim at, and a pretty close one, too, so, with this beginning of guns, "Tracie" the Spaniel dog almost began to lose his occupation and name.

Yet not quite, for he, and his kind, were gay, light-hearted little dogs, and all a-bustle to chase a ball of wood or worsted and bring it back to you and be your friend from Michaelmas unto Michaelmas and till death do us part, amen.

And so the Spaniel lived in grange and in hall, and was very highly esteemed for his good and friendly qualities by all good country people—even though men said, "Nay, 'Tracie,'" when they went to shoot the partridge sitting.

And "Tracie," thereupon, would put his tail between his legs and run and sit in the housekeeper's room and eat gingerbread.

Now Mr. George Markland had lately come a-visiting to Hives in Berkshire. And in his packs he had brought a fine fowling-piece shipped to him out of Nuremburg, a piece said to be of more nimble ignition than the guns he had previously purchased in Pall Mall. And so, this golden October morning, Mr. Markland must needs go out and shoot his piece off. For, though Mr. Markland was a poet, he was, at the same time, of family, and fond of the gentlemanly sports.

"Nay, 'Tracie,'" says Mr. Markland. But who cares for men like George Markland? Not "Tracie," anyhow, for he comes dancing along as merrily as a grig.



## THE SPRINGER SPANIEL

"Fie, 'Tracie,' go home!" says Mr. George, and he makes pretence to pick up a pebble. At this "Tracie's" joy knows no bounds, for he thinks that a stone is to be thrown for him to retrieve.

"Od rot it, come then," says Mr. Markland, "since needs you must, but devil the chance will be mine do *you* be with me."

And our poet walks on, but presently he forgets about "Tracie" in the completion of his well-known sonnet to the address of Miss Prudence Honeyman, the daughter of his host, Squire Honeyman.

But, all of a sudden, *roc-coc and rattletaps*, "Tracie" flushes a couple of cock pheasants out of the hedge between Cowslip Bottom and Forty Acres! Mr. Markland, who is just pondering that lovely penultimate line of his sextette—"No flower on earth compares with beauteous Prue"—gives the very devil of a jump!

Then, upon an epoch-making impulse, he ups his gun ("raising the mouth," he calls it afterwards) and *bang* (bless us and save us, but thus to shoot flying is a sport indeed!), therefore *bang* once more, and both birds are down and dead as doornails.

Now, just where did they fall? But, while Mr. George is still wondering, "Tracie" trots up, first with one pheasant and then with the other—just as though they had been Madam Prue's ball of sampler worsted that he carried.

"Good dog, 'Tracie,'" says Mr. George Markland.

Now it would take all too long to tell how, that very afternoon, Mr. Markland persuaded the Squire to come out and enjoy this so new sport of his. However, go out they did, and with them they took "Tracie" the Spaniel to spring birds and to retrieve the same. And very well indeed did "Tracie" do both these duties.

And, should you want to know more of Mr. Markland's sport, then you may read a book of poetry called *Pteryplegia: or, the Art of Shooting Flying*, in which the Poet has put all things down.

And in a copy of *Pteryplegia*, which may be seen in the library of Hives to this day, is inscribed, in the author's own spidery write of hand, these words:

## THE SPRINGER SPANIEL

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATE  
TO "TRACIE" THE SPANIEL, WHO  
DID FIRST SPRING BIRDS TO SPORTSMEN  
AND TO HIS OBLIGED AND HUMBLE  
SERVANT, THE AUTHOR.

But, as Prue Markland said to her husband when she read what he'd written, "La, George dear, you are the *quizz!*"

And "Tracie's" great, great, great grand puppy carries on the "Tracie" tradition to this day, and remains, I think, the best all-round worker that ever the, one-dog, owner of a rough shoot sent, *hie-lost*, to find a runner for him in an acreage of roots.



## PTERYPLEGIA<sup>1</sup>

(THE SPRINGER SPANIEL)

*Mr. George Markland was stalking a pheasant  
For to shoot it in situ, the mode of the day,  
But "Tracie," the Spaniel, flushed the quiescent  
Old bird, who, up rising, flew loudly away.  
Then the Poet, on impulse he could not restrain,  
Fired his piece, and the pheasant fell dead on the plain.*

*Mr. George Markland said, "Excellent 'Tracie,'  
Had you not sprung the bird, ne'er the Art I'd have known;  
Man's joy," Mr. Markland observed, "in the chase he  
Redoubles who fires not ere pheasants be flown.  
Now, to gather our spoils—" "I am yours to command,"  
Wagged "Tracie," and found them and brought them to hand.*

*Mr. Markland sat down and said, "Since I am Poet,  
I must weave, of a surety, such sport into song."  
So he wove; then arose with a wreath to bestow it  
On "Tracie," but "Tracie" had gotten along.  
"Never mind," Mr. George said, "Henceforth, in two words,  
He is 'Tracie' the Springer and Bringer of Birds."*

\* \* \* \* \*

*And on "Tracie" runs, through the thick that is treble  
With bramble and whinbush and briar becurled;  
He'll push through a rough, be it never so rebel,  
He's bright as a pin and as game as a pebble—  
In fact, he's the best little dog in the world;  
And we'd say, did but one dog be all of our gun-dog  
To spring us a bird and retrieve us the same,  
That no dog so canny'll go as the Spaniel  
"Tracie" the Springer and Bringer of Game.*

<sup>1</sup> Pteryplegia: or, *The Art of Shooting Flying*, by George Markland (1727).



# THE ENGLISH SETTER









## THE ENGLISH SETTER

**F**AST as a racehorse, graceful as a fay, the white English Setter gallops gaily through a hundred years, and more, of English sport. And, if I had to pick a dog (*not* a Fox-hound) to be typical of English country life and the English country gentleman from 1800 to, say, 1890, I would pick, to be that dog, the White Setter. And ninety years is a long, long day.

The Setter, like the pibroch, as performed by Mr. Patterson Corby, "was wild, he was fitful, as wild as the breeze," and he could, and often did, gallop across the whole blessed lordship before he settled down to business. But always he was the real beauty to look at, and, for all his plumed delicacy of person, a glutton to work.

His disappearance from the shooting party came all along with the driving of grouse and partridges, and with the covert shoot become as nowadays we know it. Yet on the occasional hill he is still to be found—from the twelfth to the twentieth of August—for the red heather never changes. Whereas on the manor the arrival of the reaping machine has, perhaps, had as much to do with the passing of the Setter as any new fashion of butts and both guns out.

But the days of the smock-frock, the days when the barley stubble, that now is so shaven, stood high above men's shooting-boots—ah, those were the brave days of "Ponto" and "Rover," of "Flo" and "Juno."

Nimrods who rode to the cub-hunting at six a.m. on the golden mornings of early September would jog by the shooting gentlemen, their keepers and their dogs, all on the way to fields where the dew lay thick and the scent lay fresh and strong and the sunrise walked a-tip-toe. For those days, I have said, were the palmy days of the Setter and the early start.

"Morning, George," would say the young man on the old mare, "after the little brown birds, eh?"

## THE ENGLISH SETTER

"Yes, Fred, old fellow," would say the gentleman in the wideawake and whiskers, "and when you've given sly Reynard a drubbing, why not join us at luncheon? The ladies bring our tucker to the Fairies' Well at one o'clock—your cousin Lucy——"

And you may be sure Master Fred would find that the mare had done as much as was good for her long before midday.

And on all these jolly occasions, the Setter, be certain, played a prominent part.

And how few of us there are, we who were boys when Victoria reigned at Windsor, who did not shoot our first partridge over a Setter? A "father-and-son occasion," of course. And that of a first breech-loader, too? Well, I should not wonder, for one seems to remember, "When *I* began my boy, it was muzzle-loaders, and very good guns they were," etc., etc.

And then came the uncoupling of "Dash" and "Nell." And away they went, the beauties, like the very wind, racing and ranging. And then, a schoolboy heart gives the very devil of a thump, for oh, see "Nell"! She has checked in her gallop as though she'd turned to stone—to stone. Immovable she is, and "Dash," far off but equally immovable, look how "Dash" backs her!

Frozen and statuesque the white dogs stand.

"Now, Mas'er Tom," says old Bagwell, all corduroy coat, broken bowler and Newgate fringe, "now, Mas'er Tom, please."

"Now, Tom," says Dad. A hundred yards to go to "Nell."

"No hurry, my son." "Plenty time, Mas'er Tom."

"Nell" looks round over a white, blue-ticked shoulder.

"Have a care, you!" says Bagwell unnecessarily. And here we are. "Now, my son, no hurry, you know."

"Plenty time, Mas'er Tom." "Nell" puts down a white paw; woodenly as a marionette she moves—*whirr, rattle, bang, bang*——

"Two good shots, my boy!" "That's the sauce for 'em, Mas'er Tom!"

And lo, a milestone in a shooting life is passed.

And whence came the dogs of those auspicious days? And how

## THE ENGLISH SETTER

came they—the white, wavy-coat dogs, the dogs that carried the gracefully floating stern, the silken feather?

Why, *that* nobody seems to know or to care to know—unless it is you and I.

John Appleyard, who took fowl in the net for my Lord Abbott, had a spaniel dog called “Dollekin” to help him do so. Which she did by finding the broods of birds and sitting to them when found until the net was dropped upon them. And a very clever little bitch was “Dollekin” at this duty of hers.

“Dollekin” was white and she was red and she was wavy, like the spaniels of other fowlers, and yet she was different to see, because she went undocked. “How now, John Appleyard?” said my Lord Abbott, the first time that he saw “Dollekin,” “How now, John Appleyard? Why ‘Dollekin’ carrieth her tail?”

“So she does, your Righteousness,” said John, who had forgotten to dock “Dollekin” until it was too late. “What the good God gave ’tain’t for *me* to take away.”

“Step into the refectory, John, and drink a horn of ale,” said my Lord Abbott, delighted by so much rustic piety. And you may be certain that John very gladly obeyed him.

Now, in those days, abbotts were uncommon powerful folk; they were powerful in politics and powerful in society, and powerful in sport. And my Lord Abbott looked with favour on the little spaniel who was all as God made her. And, to the gentlemen falconers, and others, who visited at the Abbey, he told how clever “Dollekin” was at her work of sitting, which was quite true. And he said also that her cleverness was because she had been left as God meant her to be, which was as true as lots of other things that churchmen say. And thus his Lordship set a fashion in sitting-dogs which endures while men use dogs that sit when they sense game.

Now must not a white “Dollekin” dog, who sat to birds and wore a feathery tail, have looked like nothing on earth so much as a Setter? Especially after a cross with the Pointer had given her kind weight and the galloping pace?



## THE ENGLISH SETTER

Anyhow, when you go to Dumfriesshire in August to begin the season with a few days over Setters (or sitting-dogs), and when, at the first point, you walk up to "Duke's" stiffly held stern and white feather, that waves, ever so little, in the wind, try (if you can) to remember that "Duke" wears this decoration of his out of compliment to long-ago little "Dollekin," the sitting-dog, who did her work just as God made her.





## LAVERACK

(THE ENGLISH SETTER)

*When I would remember  
Delectable things,  
I remember September  
All whirring with wings,  
Where stubbles were golden  
And Age was unmet  
And Youth was beholden  
To Setters that set;  
For we've got to be debtors  
To white English Setters;  
The Laverack Setters  
I'm seeing them yet—*

*The galloping Graces,  
The Wind on the hill,  
Outstripped in his traces,  
They've left standing still;  
Oh, arrows of archers  
New shot from the bow  
Are but the slow marchers  
When Laveracks go!  
For where are their betters,  
The galloping Setters,  
The Laverack Setters  
That never say "No"?*

*There were racers and chasers  
On Canobie Lea,  
But never such pacers  
As these did you see;  
For the dogs we uncouple  
Are fleetest by far  
Than the fleet steed and supple  
Of Young Lochinvar;*

## LAVERACK

*On-getters, on-getters  
You'd call them, our Setters—  
Our Setters, white Setters  
That shoot like a star.*

*So when I remember  
Delectable things,  
It is always September,  
Gold stubbles, brown wings;  
And Fancy unfetters  
To gallop and go  
White Setters, white Setters  
That hold the Wind slow;  
White Setters, white Setters,  
White Laverack Setters,  
The aids and abettors  
Of ages ago.*

# THE IRISH SETTER









## THE IRISH SETTER

LIKE the other dogs out of Erin, he is red: golden red, golden sable, golden chestnut—but red all the time. And he is the best known, nowadays, of all the setters, because this red beauty of his has made him of the boudoir and of the seat beside the driver of the Rolls. Further, he is as good as he is beautiful, and as bright of brain as—well, as an Irishman ought to be.

Now do you not know a great many stories—smoking-room stories some of them may be—in which the Englishman, the Scotchman, and the Irishman are, either in the doing or the saying, played one against the other? And is it not always the nimble wit of the Hibernian that scores from the sententious Saxon, the drearily avaricious Scot? Of course it is, and, when it comes to a competition of intellects between the only gun-dogs of which each country can put up an individual representative, the Irishman scores again.

For I think it is admitted, in a breed where too much cunning is perhaps a mistake, that the Red Setter is the clever boy of the family. If a Red Setter is lazy or, perhaps it is better to say, if he feels disposed to be merry, he will make a false point a quarter of a mile away and, freezing into red sandstone, there he will stand at rest. And, meanwhile, you must jump from the one tussock of bog myrtle and heather unto the next one, and so on until you get to “Prince” and the spot where once the covey sat.

And then there is the Red Setter in *The Shooting of Shinroe*—a dog which has been made famous, along with “Maria” and “Minx” and one or two immortal others, by the Misses Somerville and Ross. This paragon, who, you’ll recall, sets, among other things, a bottle of potheen, is the celebrated subject of the one perfect two-word picture of a dog unwilling to be pulled out of a car, or an armchair—“jelly and lead.”

## THE IRISH SETTER

And, since I'm writing of Ireland, I can surely say it is a strange thing that there are only *three* gun-dogs in all fiction who are aught but the mere ghosts of paper, and that of those three, two are Irish—"Maria" and the red Unknown to whom I've just referred. No, it's not I that am forgetting the name, it's Mr. McCabe who forgot to ask it when he borrowed the dog from Jeffers. The third of the trinity is, of course, Mr. Jogglebury Crowdey's disgusting old "Ponto."

But, if I've been laughing, it is *with* my subject I've laughed, and never *at* him. For of all the pointing- and setting-dogs we meet (alas, that by moor and by manor we meet so few, so very few!) the wild Irishman, or woman, is the most beautiful to watch at work or to contemplate at rest.

Benign in the billiard-room, ruddier for the firelight, no nymph was ever so affable about sharing the sofa, and certainly never one so ready to respond to our advances as is our red and languishing "Sheila"—the tinted Venus from County Cork. Her eyes are *so* kindly brown, her whiskers are *so* Titian, her feathery tail thumps so warmly welcoming.

But see the same silken Cyprian far ranging upon the mountain! She is like the wild-fire, and will be galloping to give you sport when the gay Gordon or the White Rose of England is cooked and by with it. Head in air, she hunts most gallantly to see, and, like a hound, she goes lashing at the faintest indication of a scent.

And was it from some red hunting-dog of Finn Mac Cool and his kins that first she sprung—so brave, so gentle and so wild? How can I know, when all the experts are mute?

But I'm wondering, because there is the old fytte of Kitty Kinsella that the troubadours told in Tara, long, long ago.

It was Kitty Kinsella who, by the kindness of Father Noah, took ship in the Ark along with the Flea. But here's the last verse of this fine flight, the only one that matters here; and, if you want the others, it's of the Fellows of Trinity College that you must beg them, and not of me.

## THE IRISH SETTER

On Ararat's summit  
They landed Kit there,  
And what would become it  
Like Kitty the Fair,  
When, the sun shining free,  
She hopped down like a flea?  
And they wed her to Dennis  
And all his gold pennies—  
To Dennis McDennis,  
The Viceroy of Clare,  
Wid all his gold pennies,  
*Gold hounds* and gold hair.

It is this last line (the italics are my own) that makes me wonder a little. I know that one does not say *hounds* when one means *dogs*, and yet—the adjective? You'd never say that Bran, the deer-hound, was golden, except in courage; in coat he was brindle, bluish perhaps, —never, surely never, was he *gold*?

So, somehow, I like to imagine that when the McDennis's pretty Vicereine rode to the hawking—the Great Hawk of Donegal upon the slim wrist of her—that the dogs to be following her, and Fergne the Falconer, were the *red* dogs.

So I'll say that it *was* the red dogs who followed Kitty—and Kitty was the wild rose, so she was—the red dogs, the silky dogs, the Sheila dogs, the gallant dogs and gentle, the dogs to gallop like the wild-fire upon the brown mountain, and to set for her (as they will for us to-day) the grouse in the heather, the snipe in the bog.



## THE RED DOGS

(THE IRISH SETTER)

*The dogs out of Erin are red as red herrin',  
They are red as a flame, I declare, I declare;  
They run on brown mountains and by the smooth fountains  
From Shannon's green banks to the crooks of Kenmare;  
Oh, bright as a berry,  
They're red and they're rare,  
The setters from Kerry  
And Cork and Kildare!*

*Your Honours to pleasure they'll stretch at full measure  
And hunt the wet mountain from bottom to top;  
See them stand like a stone now—a stone, ah! you'll own now  
That you're likely this minute to hear a gun pop;  
Red dogs on a hill of  
Red birds, would they stop  
Till they'd set you the fill of  
A poulterer's shop?*

*You may go—ah! to what land? The blue hills of Scotland?  
The dales of dark Derby, high shouldered as hogs?—  
But wherever there's coveys, wherever your love is  
To climb on a hill and uncouple the dogs,  
Sure, your heart—that's unless it  
Is colder than frogs—  
Must go back—ah! confess it—  
To mountains and bogs,*

*And the red dogs of Erin that's red as red herrin',  
That fly like the flame, like the flame, I declare,  
By the bogs and brown mountains and soft-flowing fountains,  
Till they stand like a stone—both the beautiful pair;  
Oh, red as the cherry,  
Oh, red dogs and rare,  
Are the red dogs of Kerry  
And Cork and Kildare!*





# THE GORDON SETTER







## THE GORDON SETTER

THE Setter appeals, before other gun-dogs, to the man who is *only* a shooting-man. The man who loves retrievers and spaniels, is usually, the shooting-man who *hunts* and who "rides to hunt"—that is, who wants to see hounds work. This sort of shooting-man is the one who will willingly stand out of a drive, or a beat, to watch his Labrador on the line of a running pheasant, and who, if the dog is successful thereon, will feel that the morning has been made for him by this black dog of his. The man who loves Setters, their beauty, their pace, their clockwork cleverness, is the man who puts shooting before hunting.

Indeed, the Setter does his work that his master may get his gun off. The retriever, on the contrary, plays his part only *after* the Gun has played his. In fact, all that some retriever-men ask of shooting is to attend the day with a good dog and a walking-stick. And, though I have known many shooting-men with *personal* gun-dogs, these dogs have always been retrievers or spaniels. The Setters have, somehow, ever been kennel dogs, and handled in the field, not by the Squire, but by his gamekeeper.

And this is strange, for the Setter is, before all gun-dogs, a lovely dog and a most loving. And, if this preference for the retriever implies anything, I suppose it implies that Man is a *hunting*-animal himself, rather than a *shooting* one.

To-day, when the Setter, of any variety, is scarcely seen on the manor, the Gordon Setter—the beautiful black dog with the red gold of Ireland to show him off—is seen least often of all. And, when he *is* seen, his occasional white toe, or white breast-pin, tells that it was to some great, great grandmama of his that the St. John dog went when, long ago, men first thought to make a black retriever.

Even when the Setter was the common dog on the stubble or the brae, the Black and Tan was never so well liked as the English

## THE GORDON SETTER

Setter or the Irish. He hunted with his head down, like the bloodhound that his colour a little suggests. And he circled about his game as though that black of his came, at one time or another, not from the bloodhound, but from some glossy Highland collie. And he was difficult, oh, *difficult*, to check from chase of fur.

As a schoolboy I was sent on a September day to shoot partridges over a brace of Gordons. How those two jewels laughed at the young gamekeeper who was supposed to handle them! They went flickering hither and thither, they ran riot in a flock of blackface sheep—they would probably have worried a wether had not the “wee red one” jumped up under their noses.

“The wee red one”? Why, don’t you remember the tale of the new herd-boy sent, with the old collie, to “ca’ the yowes frae the knowes”? He was long in the coming back, and, at last, his master went to see what kept him. Yes, the loon had the flock collected sure enough, and he would have been home long syne, he explained, had it not been for the “wee red one” that kept breaking away whenever old “Rab” had it almost folded. And, of course, it was a hare that the old dog could not, try as he would, “haud again.”

And it was the “wee red one” that took “Joan” and “Chloe,” *ventre a terre*, out of my life. And that’s the fact, for since they never came back I never met them again.

Yet—the lovely sinners!—I see them now, I hear the hopeless whistle, as they sweep, like swallows, among the stookit corn of the Angus laigh and away to join the many dogs that, for the good report or the ill, one never forgets.

The Blacks and Tans, the Gordons, are named for the Bonny Duke of Gordon, who first fancied them. But before the Blacks and Tans happened, his Grace, I’ve heard tell, trusted in the red dogs of the McDennis of Clare.

Now of an August morning in Dutch William’s day, his Grace would go to the shooting on the south side of Fidich. And, on the brae face above the Fidich water, his ghillies uncoupled the red dogs. And, over moss and moor, the dogs galloped that the *Coileach*



## THE GORDON SETTER

*an taobh-tuath*<sup>1</sup> might have his pleasure of the grouse. But, so men say, never on that red hillside did a red dog stand. And the Chief was for going home.

But there sat on a stone, to witness the sport, or the want of it, a shepherd from the braes of Edzell in Angus. His name was David Joly, and the name of his wise black collie was "Fearn." And David Joly doffed his bonnet and, his grey locks lifting in the breeze, he had speech with The Gordon.

"Chief," says David, "in all Angus no dog is so canny a dog as 'Fearn' at finding the fowl."

"Tuts, Davie man," says the *Coileach an taobh-tuath*, "mind your *bestial*; it's the grouse I'm seeking."

"And it's 'Fearn' will find the grouse to your Grace," says David.

"My red dogs hold the hillside bare of game," says his Grace.

"Oh, *Coileach an taobh-tuath*," said David, "will you pay me a pound Scots for each bird that 'Fearn' finds to you on that same hill?"

"Ay, will I," says the Duke.

"*Erich an a' mhonadh!*" said David to "Fearn."

And so away went "Fearn" to the hill, and presently he stood.

Now on the braes of Angus it was, and it may be still, the custom of the shepherds to teach their dogs to creep upon the grouse, like the tod creeps, and take them like the same. So, when "Fearn" stopped, David Joly held up his staff, and "Fearn" kent fine to stay put.

And the Duke walked over to "Fearn" with his guests and his ghillies, and lo, a brood of twenty-three grouse rose to them.

"Yon's twenty-three pounds Scots," says David Joly.

"You're saying so, David," said the *Coileach an taobh-tuath*, without enthusiasm. And while he was yet seeking the bawbees in his sporran, there was "Fearn" standing again.

And, anon, the *Coileach an taobh-tuath* was for away home.

But next day there was Mungo Matheson, his Grace's Doer,

<sup>1</sup> The Cock of the North.

## THE GORDON SETTER

chapping at David's door and seeking the loan of "Fearn" down by to sire puppies to the Duke's red "Colleen of Clare."

So, when next you notice that black-and-tan "Ranger" is inclined to circle about his game, as though he would *hold* it rather than *set* it, remember, as you bid him have a care, that black "Fearn," his first forebear, was the wisest sheep-dog that ever held a breakaway of tups on the braes of Angus.



## ARISTOCRAT

(THE GORDON SETTER)

*Gay goes the Gordon—  
The heather for him,  
With a Duke or a Lord on  
The mountain's high rim;  
For the blood he was made of  
Beyond the blue Forth  
Walked aye in the shade of  
The Cock of the North.*

*That Chieftain so bonny,  
With his black dogs a-nigh,  
When, so brightly looked on, he  
So nobly passed by,  
Each lass, when he'd passed her,  
Would whisper and tell,  
"So bonny a master—  
His dogs match him well!"*

*So gay goes the Gordon  
On the mountain's far rim,  
On this side of Jordan  
Who's the marrow of him,  
Since the blood he is made of  
Came forth and came forth  
To walk in the shade of  
The Cock of the North?*



# THE POINTER









## THE POINTER

THE Pointer tradition is all for its qualities in the field. For, upon the drawing-room sofa, or even on the show bench, the dog has never shone. And, to-day, how many of us ever see a Pointer? The setter, especially the golden Irishman, is a pet dog, as well as the occasional dog of the sportsman, and, in the former capacity, he is a not unfamiliar figure in parks and places where Fashion promenades.

But a Pointer? A liver-and-white Pointer? Personally I have not seen a Pointer *work* for thirty years, and when, last summer, I met one, he walking out with an old-fashioned cut of country gentleman, I had to rub my eyes, I had to think for three whole seconds, before I could tell the lady who asked me what manner of dog was this.

Then I remembered, and I said, "That, my dear, is a Pointer, once the most indispensable of all the shooting-dogs. Questing at full gallop (why, it is written that the celebrated 'Drake,' when on top gear, worked at fifty miles an hour!), he found the sitting covey for his master, and, on winding it, he stood entranced and statue still. And after the birds were flushed and the sportsman had, *bang, bang*, taken toll of them, the dog, on the word of command—*Soho*, or *Toho*, or something, do not ask me what—would retrieve one after the other as prettily as you like.

"But all this *only* was if your dog was the ideal dog. If he was *not*—but why dwell on 'old, unhappy, far-off things,' my dear?" And she didn't.

"Stonehenge," writing of the famous "Drake," gives a vivid picture of this matchless dog at work. He says, "'Drake' was, in his day, the fastest and most wonderful animal that ever quartered a field, and his race up to a brace of birds at Shrewsbury in the field trials of 1868, when the ground was so dry as to cause a cloud of dust to rise on his dropping to their scent, was a sight which will probably never be seen

## THE POINTER

again. His extraordinary pace compelled his dropping in this way, for otherwise he could not have stopped himself in time. He was truly a phenomenon among Pointers." But "Drake" himself is dust these sixty years.

Pointers were worked singly, or in braces, and a beautiful sight it was, as I have seen, to watch a pair of fast and resolute dogs beat a hillside of heather or hunt an acreage of arable.

On the manor modern farming methods, and on the moor the fashion for driving, have practically ousted the Pointer. Likewise the unsportsmanly sloth which thinks it a toil to hasten for yet another hundred yards uphill, uphill, through the long, red heather, uphill under the August sunshine, uphill to find, on arrival at the point, that it is but a latent laverock that "Wag" has stood to—this effeminacy has also served to sound the Pointer's knell.

In sport to-day the Pointer's season, where he has one, is as ephemeral as the Mayfly's, the drake for whom "Drake" was named. Yet there are grouse moors where the Pointer, in all the elegance and gallantry of a hundred years ago, may still have, during the first week of the season, his short, sweet hour of "quarter," "stand," and "back."

But, about the twentieth of August, "Thank Heaven," says the thrice-enobled heir, "we've done with the damned dogs for *this* year!" And he tells his valet, "Both guns to-day, Jevons. And you to load, please. We're driving."

Then, to a flutter of far-off flags and fifty shots a minute, the Pointer's day is done.

And "Belle" and "Countess," "Ranger" and "Shot" may dance expectantly, then madly, and, last of all, hopelessly in their kennel yard. For the Guns go by without them, and, presently, the teams drop wise, soft, slobbery heads upon liver-ticked paws and doze off, for another year, into idle, ancestral reveries and dreams.

And *why* does a Pointer point? And *when* did he first do it? Why, some say one thing, and some say the other. Say some, "He happened in Spain—so how can we know?" Say others, "In Spain or in England,

## THE POINTER

it was all long, long ago—so how can we say?” And neither the schools nor the *cognoscenti* can read us our riddle. So, since we want to know, we must e’en sit down and find its answer each man for himself.

Old “Towler” was one of Sir Roger de Coverley’s foxhounds. He was the slowest old dog in a pack which made it a point of honour never to hunt faster than six miles an hour. But “Towler” was the truest of all Sir Roger’s leisurely lop-eared lot.

And when “Towler” hit the drag of a fox at dewy six a.m. he would shove his nose into it and sit down and yowl with ecstasy, dwelling, even rolling, on the scent, until Sir Roger, himself ravished by such staunchness, such music, would, at length, reluctantly cheer him on.

When “Towler” was a puppy he had been walked by one of Sir Roger’s tenants, Mr. Jeremy Oakacre of Syllabub Grange, and when Ensign Brown of the Fencibles, at the end of “Towler’s” fifth season, jumped on the old hound and lamed him, Mr. Oakacre begged his favourite from Sir Roger, and took him home to be pensioned at the Grange.

And at the Grange lived “Spotty.” “Spotty” was what is to-day called a Dalmatian. So she was white and freckled upon in dark brown, and called “Spotty” because of it.

Mr. Oakacre had bought “Spotty” from a travelling showman for an old cutaway coat, a flask of *eau-de-vie* and a wallop. It began with the wallop, because the black-a-vised rogue was ill-using poor “Spotty” something cruel. So Jeremy Oakacre walloped *him* to see how *he* liked it.

Afterwards “Spotty” was the first dog of all to be spoken of as being able to do everything except talk and wait at table. She was a very obedient dog, was “Spotty”—a dog has to be that if she travels with the mountebanks. And she would lie down and die when she was told, and stay down, too—till Doomsday an’ all, said Jeremy.

And she could point cards in a pack—she was that *artful*. She was



## THE POINTER

fast, too, for she could take a hare—very nearly. And tireless, for she could trot, under Jeremy's red gig, in and out of Tufton Mallory and never her mouth open—and Tufton Mallory's fifteen miles each way, and Jeremy's cob, "Rapid," could, and did, do the same, there and back again, in two hours seventeen minutes.

"Spotty" had a puppy by "Towler" the Foxhound. She really, I expect, had more than that, but only one concerns us—the dog "Crib."

"Crib" was the quaint one. He was like a hound, so he was, a hound with a pipe-stem stern; he was blue pied, like old "Towler," he was spotty, like his dam. And he was fastish, too, like her, and every bit as natural obedient as she. And when "Crib" smelt game he would enjoy the find by *dwelling* on the scent of it rather than by following a line at once, and that was like "Towler." But "Crib" never gave voice to his ecstasy, and that, again, was like "Spotty," who was mute as a dream—or a Dalmatian.

Now it happened like this. One hot September day Mistress Oakacre said to Jeremy Oakacre that she wanted two brace partridges to put into a pasty against Sunday. "I'll refuse you naught, Alice," said Mr. Oakacre, "though surelie I must tramp all over the farm to get them," added he, "for 'tis the worst season for birds as ever I did know."

"Nay, Dad," said his daughter Rose. "All that needs to do is to take our 'Crib' along and bid him quest while you do sit on gate. When he smells partridge he'll sit down, same as I do to smell the violets in April time, or same as old 'Towler' used to do to smell the fox—and would have done to sense a partridge, I do verily believe, only Squire would have rated him . . ."

"How you do run on, child," said her mother.

"Nay, but, Dad," said Rosie, "listen, and it will be time enow for you to climb down from gate when 'Crib' doth sit to consider the partridge smell, and, oh, 'tis all too hot to hurry, so do you bid him *die* till you get there—same as dear 'Spotty' could die doth 'Crib' die . . ."



## THE POINTER

“Why, Rosie girl, whatever fool thing will you be saying next? You leave the hunting of birds to men, my lass,” said her father, as he took his gun off the pegs.

But presently, when she heard him blow his whistle in the yard, Rosie couldn't help but laugh.





## THE SONG OF THE POINTERS

(THE POINTER)

*We once were the popular people,  
We once were the pets of the squire,  
And as far as you'd see from the steeple  
We'd gallop all over a shire;  
And, northwards of Tweed, not a Ben'll  
But be one that we ranged far and near,  
We dogs that you only unkennel  
For less than a fortnight a year—  
Oh, dear,  
For ten little days in a year.*

*We passed with the scythe and the sickle  
And the men who poured powder and shot  
Into Purdeys, we passed with the fickle  
New coming of those who did not;  
With the coming of butt and of hurdle  
We passed, and with times out of joint  
Where there's scarcely a corn stalk to girdle  
A partridge who'd sit to a point;*

*So we wag at the kennel's high railing,  
And wistful we wait on the flags,  
The teams who were once so unfailing—  
The very essential of bags  
Or ever a driven bird sped fast,  
Or ever two guns were a craze;  
For only the heather is steadfast  
And pays us our merciful days;*

*Wherein, come each August, we shall up  
And, again at the ancient command,  
Stretch out, in our hurricane gallop,  
To quarter, to back and to stand;  
And you, whom we serve? Why, you then'll  
See style that your fathers held dear,  
And the dogs who come out of your kennel  
For less than a fortnight a year,  
A year,  
For ten little days in a year.*





















